Rural Common Service Centres

291. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are planning a major digital expansion by setting up one lakh Rural Common Service Centres which would basically be computer kiosks, at a total cost of Rs. 5,742 crore, through a public-private partnership (PPP) mechanism;

(b) if so, whether these centres are expected to bridge the digital divide existing today between the urban and rural areas;

(c) whether these centres are proposed to substantially extend the reach of digital services and economic opportunities into the rural and remote areas of the country; and

(d) if so, by when a final decision for setting up these centres would be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. These centres would provide Government and private services at the doorstep of the citizen. As such they are expected to contribute to bridging the digital divide existing between rural and urban areas.

(c) These centers would extend the reach of digital services to rural areas and improve economic opportunities in rural areas.

(d) The Scheme has been approved by the Government in September, 2006.

BSNL tender

292. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE:
SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the tender issued by the BSNL for procurement of equipments for 60 million GSM lines;